(c) whether Government would instruct the authorities concerned for installation of cable connection at the earliest so that the proper benefits of telephone line could reach upto the villages and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. A new telephone connection was provided on WLL system in Village Jolly, District Bulandsahar, UP by BSNL and not by VSNL. Due to poor availability of electric supply in the vi.llage, the battery provided with the terminal could not be charged and hence the consumers could not utilize the services properly.

(c) the WLL telephone number has since been shifted to under ground cable.

Universal obligations support policy

4537. SHRI BHAGATRAM MANHAR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 769 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 7th March, 2002 and state:

(a) whether Government have initiated any efforts for implementation of Universal Obligations Support Policy (UOSP); and

(b) if so, the allocations made under the above policy?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) and (b) The Universal Service Support Policy has taken effect from 01.04.2002 for reimbursement on the basis of actual physical performance as per the guidelines issued. An amount of Rs. 1805 crores has been provided for in the Budget Estimate of the Financial Year 2002-2003 towards Universal Service Fund.

VPT by private companies

4538. SHRI BHAGAT RAM MANHAR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that private sector licences of basic telephone service have not been able to fulfil their committed performance obligations in respect of provisions of Village Public Telephones (VPTs);

(b) the names of these companies;

(c) whether Government propose to impose stringent penalty on these companies for not adhering to the norms laid down by the telecom department;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) whether MTNL have also failed to provide basic telephone services in the remotest villages and if so, what is the percentage of coverage of basic telephone services provided by MTNL?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) M/s Tata Teleservices in Andhra Pradesh, M/s Reliance Telecom in Gujarat, M/s HFCL Infotel in Punjab, M/s Hughes Telecom (India) Ltd. in Maharashtra, M/s Bharti Telenet in Madhya Pradesh and M/s Shyam Telelink in Rajasthan, have not been able to fulfil their voluntarily committed performance obligation for provision of Village Public Telephones.

(c) Government has recovered Liquidated Damage charges as per provisfons of Licence Agreement for delay in performance by these defaulting companies. Further, Government proposes to proceed as per the provisions contained in their Licence Agreement.

(d) Does not arise in view of (c) above.

(e) No, Sir. MTNL is licensed to operate only in the territories of Delhi and Mumbai for Basic Telephone Service.

Slow pace of providing VPT

4539. SHRI BHAGATRAM MANHAR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state: